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AUTOBIOGRAPHY AND REMINISCENCES OF PHILANDER PRESCOTT.

I was born on Sept. 17, 1801, in Phelpstown, Ontario county, New York. My father was a physician and a pioneer in the first settlement of the more central part of the state. He married a Miss Lucy Reed, and settled in Phelpstown, and lived for several years by his profession, but was attacked with dropsy in the abdomen, and after a lingering illness, he died, and left a family, rather poor. Soon after his death, I went to live with an uncle by the name of Reed. He worked me nearly to death, and I left him in the fall of 1818, and went to live with my eldest brother. My mother had married a second time, and died of consumption that fall. I was then an orphan, and what to do for a living was a serious question. There were two sisters younger than myself, and two brothers older. One of these was at Detroit, a clerk in a sutler's store, for the troops stationed at the above-named post. He wrote to me in the winter of 1819 to come out to see him, and he would try to give me some kind of employment, that I might in time make a living. So in the spring, in April, I got ready, and started, but it was much against the wishes of my relatives, for they said they never expected to see me again, and one of my uncles was so much opposed to my coming West that he would not loan me money enough to pay my expenses to Detroit. But this did not deter me from my object, and I started with only a few dollars—enough to take me to Buffalo by my walking the whole distance. I got to Buffalo the fourth day, and found that the lake was not clear of ice, and that the great steamboat "Walk-in-the-Water" would not sail for a week. I went to the landlord of the Black Rock house, and told him my circumstances, and asked him to board me for a week for my work, until the boat should leave for Detroit. Buffalo still showed the devastations of the war, and but a small portion of the city had been rebuilt.

On the 1st day of May the steamer Walk-in-the-Water was ready and I went on board. Four yoke of oxen and the strength of the engine took us over the rapids at the foot of the lake. We had not been long out before we came to ice, and found that it was very strong and dangerous to run against

with a full head of steam, and we worked along slowly. By morning we had got past all the ice, and went on well. The second night out one passenger fell overboard, owing to the carelessness of the sailors in not fastening one piece of the railing that was used for a gangway.

We reached Detroit without any further accident, and I found my brother making preparations to go still farther west. The troops had been ordered to the Mississippi to build forts and occupy that country, and my brother was to go along as clerk for the troops. He told me that I would have to wait until Mr. Devotion, the owner, went to New York and got a supply of goods, and came back, before I could go, and I must try and accompany him through the journey. I passed the summer with my books, and kept the store in order, until Mr. Devotion returned, when we started for the Mississippi.

Mr. Devotion chartered an old sloop, and we sailed in October, and reached Green Bay in the same month. In passing Mackinac we went ashore and took a look at the old fortifications that had once been surrendered to the British. In sailing along one day by Washington's Harbor, we struck some rocks, but went over them without injuring the sloop. There was a fort at the mouth of Fox river, which commanded the entrance. The town of Green Bay comprised three houses and an Indian agency. We had to wait two weeks here for a boat, as all the boats had been taken off by the traders, and it was late in the fall when we embarked from this point. Mr. Devotion started me ahead with an old boat, and only four men to ascend the Fox river, which was nothing but rapids for about twenty miles, and we made slow progress, and were finally frozen up at a lake called Rush lake. Here we built a house to store our goods in and waited for sleighs to come for us from Prairie du Chien. During the time we were waiting for the sledges, or "trains," as they were called, I went to the portage of the Wisconsin, two long days' walk from where we were frozen up. The first night I stopped on Fox river at an old trader's by the name of Grignow. I found him living in one of the Indian lodges. He said he had arrived late in the fall, and had no time for building, except a storehouse and a house for his men, and he was living in a lodge with his family, with a young Menomonee woman for a wife. I found his tribe had furnished about all the women for the traders' wives, for they are generally good-looking, and their

first children were as white as many of the white children. The old man said he had been a long time in the trade, and probably would stay there as long as he lived, as it suited him, and he did not care about seeking any other livelihood. My guide and I started the next morning and went to the portage that day, but it was a very hard day's work. My object in going to that place was to examine some goods that had been left there in the fall and reported to be wet. I found another class of people here, the Winnebagoes, an ugly race of people. They had always been abusive to the white people, but there were but a few of them about, and they did not molest me. I opened the goods and found all in good order, and returned back to our camp and waited for the trains. In about two weeks more they came, and we made preparations for our departure. I had to go alone again, for there were not trains enough to take all, so Mr. Devotion remained, and I went ahead and remained a few days at Prairie du Chien, to get more transportation to take a supply up to Fort Snelling.

After getting our complement of teams and Frenchmen to drive them, we started from the town that was older than Philadelphia, and there were only about 250 inhabitants in the place—that is of the French, who were the first settlers. The government had what they called a factory to furnish goods to Indians at cost, for the traders sold their goods so high that the Indians suffered a great deal from want, and the government proposed this plan for their relief. This made the traders angry, and they retaliated by underselling the government, and made them lose money, and the government abandoned the traffic.

It has never been determined whether Prairie du Chien was named after "dog" or "oak." Both are so much alike in French that no one knows which it took its origin from.

I arrived at a place called Mud Hen pond, between the head of Lake Pepin and St. Croix. It was very cold weather, and we concluded to lay over one day and let the horses rest, as we had good comfortable rooms at Mr. Faribault's, the trader for the American Fur company. The second day, in the afternoon, a large band of Sioux Indians arrived at the trader's, and we were obliged to leave for fear of our goods being stolen from the sleighs. We had not gone far before one of the teams broke through the ice, and some of the goods had to lay in the water

all night,and it was with much difficulty that we saved the horse. It was so very cold that we could with difficulty do anything. We got a rope about the neck of the horse, and all hands took hold and choked him out. This was easily done, for the moment we commenced pulling, the horse commenced struggling, and floated on the water, after which it was but little work to haul him up on the solid ice, and by whipping and running him around we got him limbered up, and kept him from freezing until we got a fire built, when we camped for the night. Our next place or point for stopping was Oliver's Grove, a place where a keel boat was frozen in, loaded with provisions for the troops. Lieut. Oliver was here with a few soldiers guarding the provisions, while other parties were hauling them away. Oliver's Grove is now called Hastings.

We arrived safe at the cantonment at the mouth of the St. Peter's river. I found my brother well, and full of work, as he was alone and had four companies to wait upon; but the troops were in a very unhealthy state, with the scurvy. Some fifty or sixty had died, and some ten men died after I arrived, but the groceries that I took up and a quantity of spruce that Dr. Purcell had sent to the St. Croix for, gave them relief. Col. Leavenworth, commanding officer, Maj. Hamilton, Maj. Larrabee, Maj. Vose, Capt. Gwinn, Capt. Perry, Capt. Gooding, Capt. Pelham, Lieut. McCabal, engineer of building; Lieut. Camp, quartermaster; Lieut. Green, Adjut. Lieut. Oliver, Lieut. McCartney, Lieut. Wilkins, Capt. or Maj. Foster, are all that I can recollect of the officers who first came to build the fort at the mouth of the St. Peter's river.

In the summer of 1820 there was not much done towards the building of the fort. The physician and commanding officer thought the location an unhealthful one, and moved all the troops over to some springs called "Camp Coldwater," nearly a mile above the present fort, on the Mississippi river. I think the name Mississippi was taken from the Menomonee dialect, and should be spelled Miscessepe, 'the big river." A few soldiers were employed hewing timber for the fort, and a site was selected by the commanding officer on the first rise, about 300 yards west of the present fort, and some timber was hauled to the spot. As the fort was to be built of hewed logs, it required a large quantity of timber, and a saw mill was wanted, as it would require a large amount of boards for so large a fort. An

examination of the Little Falls (Minnehaha) was made, and it was thought there was not water enough for a mill, as the water was very low in the summer of 1820, and St. Anthony was selected. An officer and some men had been sent up Rum river to examine the pine and see if it could be got to the river by hand. The party returned and made a favorable report, and in the winter a party was sent out to cut pine logs, and to raft them down in the spring, and they brought down about 2,000 logs by hand. Some ten or fifteen men would haul on a sled one log from one-fourth to one-half a mile, and lay it upon the bank of Rum river, and in the spring they were rolled into the river and floated down to the mouth and then made into small rafts and floated to the present landing above the bridge.

In the summer or fall, I think, Col. Leavenworth was ordered to the Missouri. The plans for the fort had been prepared by the above-named officer, but were somewhat altered by Col. Snelling, the officer succeeding, and the location was moved from the point that Col. Leavenworth selected to the present location, and the saw mill was commenced in the fall and winter of 1820-21 and finished in 1822, and a large quantity of lumber was made for the whole fort, and all the furniture and outbuildings, and all the logs were brought to the mill or the landing by hand, and hauled from the landing to the mill, and from the mill to the fort by teams. An officer by the name of Lieut. Croozer lived and had charge of the mill party. Supplies for the fort were all brought up in keel boats from St. Louis. It generally took from fifty to sixty days to come from St. Louis to Fort Snelling. The first steamboat that came to the Fort was a stern-wheeled boat from Cincinnati with the contract for supplies for the troops in June, 1823,—the name of the boat I have forgotten. There were no settlements on the Mississippi except Prairie du Chien and Rock Island, and the troops passed the summer at Camp Coldwater, and in the fall moved back again to the old cantonment and passed the winter, and got out timber for the soldiers' barracks, and before the autumn of 1823 nearly all the soldiers had been got into quarters, and considerable work had been done on the officers' quarters. The Indians were all peaceable,and all things progressed peaceably,and with all the speed that was possible for soldiers (for there is no hurrying of soldiers—they go just so fast, and out of that pace you cannot drive them).

In the fall of 1823 Mr. Devotion gave up the sutlership, owing to the small percentage that the government allowed the sutlers to trade upon. Twenty-five per cent was all that the government allowed them to charge, including the transportation and wastage, so Mr. Devotion would not furnish goods at those rates, and abandoned the business.

The paymaster had taken government drafts and sold them to the Missouri and Illinois banks, and brought their paper and paid the troops off with paper, there then being no law to the contrary. The sutler, Mr. Devotion, had to take such money as the soldiers had to give him, and he collected about seventy or eighty thousand dollars, and we went to St. Louis and found the banks all broken and closed. Mr. Devotion could do nothing to help himself, and it is supposed that the paymaster made a handsome profit out of the operation.

On our way down the river we found no settlements until we got to Hannibal, where there were two or three log houses, and below that place we would see now and then a house along the river. At Galena there were only two or three little log cabins, whose occupants were engaged in trading lead to the Indians. St. Louis was but a small town, and I do not recollect seeing more than one church, and that was Roman Catholic. There was a small market, two or three mills, one bakery, and about half a dozen steamboats, which supplied the place with all the goods that were wanted for the trade. Alton and Quincy had then only four or five houses each. I stayed through the winter, and in the spring Mr. Devotion obtained for me a lot of Indian goods on credit, and I took the little boat and started back to Fort Snelling to trade with the Sioux Indians. When I returned to Fort Snelling the officers had all got into quarters. I was fifty-five days going from St. Louis to the Fort.

I passed the winter trading with the Indians. In the fall my brother came up to pass the winter with me. A Mr. Baker came up with me to teach school at the Fort, and a Mr. Whitney came from Green Bay with some goods.

The Indians had been very quiet all this time, except on the Missouri, where they had killed a white man, and Col. Snelling had been ordered to demand the murderer. The Sioux brought in two Indians to leave as hostages until they could get the murderer. They were put in prison, and when they wanted to go out the sentinel would accompany them, and bring them

back again. After the lapse of a month, one morning early they wanted to go out, and the sentinel took his musket and went with them. When they had gone a short distance from the fort they started to run away from the sentinel. The man fired at them, but missed. The whole garrison was soon out, but the Indians were too swift for them and got clear. The Colonel then sent the Indians word that if they did not bring in the murderer, he would take some of their principal men and hang them; this set them to work, and they brought in the offender. Quite a number of Indians came in with the prisoner. They had a British flag and a large medal. Col. Snelling had a fire built and burned the flag before the Indians and cut the medal off the neck of the Indian murderer, who wore it, and locked him up, and sent the Indians off home again. At the first opportunity the prisoner was sent below for trial, and that was the last which was ever heard of him; for, although he was cleared by the court for want of evidence, he never reached home again.

After my winter trade was over, my brother went to St. Louis and paid up our debt with the furs I had received in trading, and tried to get more goods, but the companies had all joined together, and made a monopoly of the whole trade, and would not furnish any goods to any person to trade with on his individual account. This caused an opposition company to organize, called the Columbia Fur Company, which my brother and I joined. During the previous autumn, while I was living at Lands End, I was married to my present wife. The custom of getting wives amongst the Sioux is by purchase, and it frequently happens that there is not much love in the case, and sometimes the woman never expects to marry the man that she is sometimes compelled to marry. Therefore, suicide is not an uncommon thing among the women, as was the case on Lake Pepin at Maiden Rock. I also know of several cases of suicide by hanging. Two young girls hung themselves within one week, in Little Crow's band, because they did not love the men that their parents had selected as husbands for them. Another went over the falls because her husband had slighted her and married another, and in his presence, with her boy in the bow of the canoe, and painted and decorated in the finest of the Indian style, she paddled over the Falls of St. Anthony. During that

year (1824) many of the Indians died of starvation and cold. They had been out west of Lake Traverse on the Cheyenne river in search of buffalo, but were not successful, and the snow fell very deep and they could not follow the game, and they turned back, hoping to reach their old villages, where they had some corn cached in holes in the ground. They had eaten all of their dogs and horses, and had become so weak they could with difficulty walk. Another blinding storm of wind came on, and they could not see where to go, and there was no timber or wood with which to make a fire, and none but the strongest survived the storm.

The lands around the Fort, except the military reservation, belonged to the Indians, and the country could not be settled, and here a few of us lived about thirty years, seeing very little change in the position of affairs from Galena to this place. Galena sprung up as soon as the lead trade was opened up.

The following spring the Indian agent, Major S. Taliaferro tried to induce the Indians to engage in farming at Lake Calhoun, and wanted me to go out with my old father-in-law and another chief, Mock-pu-we-chas-tah. My father-in-law was the first one that would venture out. His name was Kee-e-he-ie, "he that flies." The agent sent a soldier and a team of two yokes of cattle, and we two plowed about a month, but there were but few Indians that would venture out the first year, as they were afraid of the Chippewas. The next year quite a number came out, and we had more applicants than we could supply places for, and some went to work with their hoes and dug small patches of ground to commence with. The first year we cut a large quantity of tamarack logs, with which to rebuild the council house that had been burnt at Fort Snelling.

THE INDIANS.

Wabasha * is at the present time (1861) the first and oldest chief of the Sioux nation. Many years ago he went to Montreal (the French word for the name of the Great Mountain or the Real or Royal Mountain which is in the vicinity of the city of that name). Some five or six Sioux accompanied Wabasha on

* Wa-pa-ha-sa, according to the Dakota lexicon; but spelled as above for the English pronunciation, Waubashaw.

his visit to see the English, and from what I can learn from the Sioux it was about 1780,—some twenty-five years before Lieut. Zebulon M. Pike explored the Mississippi river. The Sioux say that up to this period they had no chiefs among them. Wabasha said the English received him very coolly at first. He said that he filled his pipe for all the assemblage to smoke—a pipe prepared for that purpose, with a large flat stem painted blue, an emblem of peace with them. This he presented to the governor. The governor said he could not smoke out of a bloody pipe, and took the pipe and handed it to another man standing by, supposed to be an officer, and told him to strike Wabasha three blows with the flat side of the pipe. Wabasha did not know how to interpret this treatment, and stood waiting a moment, when the governor said: "I do not suppose you understand the meaning of this, but I will explain it to you,—you have killed three of my people, traders, up in your country, and this is to show you that I am not pleased at your murdering the white people; and those blows are to remain there until you do something to wipe them off, and when that is done I will smoke with you." Wabasha promised fidelity to the English, and said he would try to give up the murderers, and the governor gave him some flags and medals, and asked how many fires, or tribes, they had in the whole nation. Wabasha said there were seven, and accordingly he received seven large medals and flags, viz.: Medawakantons, Wahpetons, Wahpacootas, Sissetons, Yanktons, Tetons, and the seventh we have never been able to ascertain. Some say that the Yanktons were called two fires or two tribes, and some say the Sissetons had a division or two tribes, but we have no authority for any of these surmises, and I think it was some other tribe living near the Sioux, who may have been at peace with the Sioux, probably the Menomonees or Winnebagoes which Wabasha took into his count of seven fires, for in all of their councils they speak of seven fires or seven tribes, confederated in one nation, to occupy and protect from invasion a certain district of country for hunting purposes. Wabasha came back and distributed his flags and medals, and from that day their chiefs were recognized by all the governments.

Nothing has ever been found that gives any knowledge of the Indian race, from whence they came, or how they became possessed of the country they now occcupy. Tradition does not

take us far back, and figures they have none, but their customs and habits are more to be relied upon than anything else we have. To give some idea of the character they sustain to other nations is the nearest that we can come to establishing a relationship. Their manners and customs are very similar to those of the old world, and by wars they have been forced from one country to another, until they have populated the whole of America. Their manners and customs are very similar to those of the peoples we read of in sacred history. Their feasts, for instance, of the first fruits of the farm, or of game killed, show this. The first must be cooked and many persons invited to partake of the food, and their gods invoked to continue to give them success in war, and the departed spirits are to have a share in the ceremony—they must be appealed to, and their guidance invoked, because the Indians think their departed relatives have much to do with the welfare of the living on earth. The following is a common form used by the Indians as a petition to the spirits of the departed:

"My father (or mother, uncle, cousin), you have gone to the spirit land—you can look on us but we cannot see you, only in our dreams. You have power over the minds of men, and you have power over the hunts and the farm, and even our lives depend much upon the pleasure of thy will to either give blessings or to withhold them, and I have prepared the feast for you, hoping that you will be pleased with it, as our first fruits of the field (or the hunt), which we offer in accordance with the custom and usages of old."

In this feast God is not named, nor even thought of, but the Indians are more punctual in their idolatrous worship than the Christian people in their worship, for there is hardly anything the Indians do without some kind of worship, either in feasts or sacrifice. In traveling, hunting, war, and in whatever they do, when they have time, they commence with an offering of some kind.

The following are the principal gods that the Sioux Indians worship:

The first or most prominent is Tokenshe, the large granite boulder, and Wakaukah, the earth; Tokonshe, grandfather; Wakankah, old woman, are names of gods they worship, and who are often appealed to for relief and success. All kinds of animals and fish are supposed to be possessed of power to mi-

grate from their own bodies to those of human beings, and cause disease, and the conjurors use all the powers of jugglery to cast out the intruder. The shape of the supposed destroyer of the peace and health of the person suffering is cut out of a piece of birch bark and put into a litle dish of painted water outside the door of his lodge, and the doctor, who is inside, singing and gesticulating and making hideous noises, finally emerges from the lodge where the patient is, and there are two or three men standing ready, who, at a certain signal, shoot into the dish with powder and wad only, and blow the image, or piece of bark, into small pieces, and the dish containing the image is frequently shattered. This is supposed either to kill the intruder or frighten him from the body of the patient, and his recovery is looked for immediately after the operation. After the guns are discharged the doctor falls upon what is left of the fragments with violent contortions and all imaginable noises, and a woman sometimes stands on the doctor's back during this operation, after which she takes him by the hair of the head and leads him back, he on all fours, to the place where the patient is, where he sings for a brief time and rattles his gourd, sucks the parts where the most pain is, and the ceremony is ended. All kinds of animals are brought into this kind of jugglery, and are shot by the doctors as a cure for disease.

Their preparations for war are very carefully planned. The war party is gotten up by one who thinks himself capable of leading a party successfully to get scalps and not lose any. If a Sioux loses a child, by what means it makes no difference, the father must appease the departed spirit, for if any of the rest of the family, or a relative, should be taken sick after the death of the child, the parents are accused of negligence and delay in fulfilling the law of offerings and sacrifices, which is as follows: After a death the nearest relatives must either go to war or get up a great medicine dance; and as the latter is very expensive, many of the young men prefer going to war, but either is considered sufficient to keep the spirit of the departed at rest and satisfied with the living relatives. Every night for about a week before starting the head of the war party begins to sing and to commune with the war gods, and dream, and his imagination is so worked up by constant jugglery that he dreams many things about their war excursions, which he

relates to the party that are to go with him. The earth, and the rocks or boulders are gods that are most generally appealed to for guidance and success in their excursion for scalps, and these gods are prayed to constantly on their route to direct them where the enemy are few in number and most easily approached. They also ask their gods to turn the minds of their adversaries from thoughts of an enemy approaching them. After the war party gets into the country where the Chippewas hunt, the head man orders all shooting to stop, and if one of the party should shoot any game, or fire his gun, the rest of the party would take him and cut his blanket in pieces, and destroy his gun as a punishment for breaking the rules of war parties. These marauding parties are too successful, for generally they get a scalp and return home satisfied. The head man pretends that he can call to himself the sun spirit, who will tell him where and how many there are to be killed on that trip, and if any are to be injured of his party he will be informed of it by the devoted spirit that he appeals to. In order to bring the spirit to him, he makes a little lodge near their camp at night, and digs a shallow hole in the ground, and puts in it a small quantity of water, reddened with paint, and sits down by it and commences singing, and at the same time places in the hole a little of his food, thus inviting the spirit to his war feast. Then he sings and rattles his gourd and makes all kinds of hideous noises (it is astonishing how they make them). After awhile the war man becomes silent, and he is then supposed to be in communication with the gods. After a while he gives one rap with his gourd, which counts one scalp for his war party. As many blows as he strikes, so many scalps they are to get, as his god has brought them to his sight. In the spirit he sees his enemies, and gives them a blow with his gourd, in the water, where he pretends to see them, and says that the blow will give them success, and kill the enemies' spirits, and they will all disappear. But if he gives a blow with a groan, it implies that some one will be wounded or killed, which sets the whole party to wailing for a few moments. When all is hushed and they start off, one man goes ahead as a spy with the war pipe, and returns to the party every half-day, or sooner if he discerns anything, and gives a minute account of all that he has seen or heard while he has been absent, and so they prowl about until they find an enemy, or their provisions give out, and they return home.

The scalp dance is performed by the women mostly dancing, and the men sing and drum for the women and young girls to dance.

Death is looked upon with a singular or fanciful idea. The Sioux say that death comes in the shape of a curious looking being, something in the shape of a human being, with a curious head, and very corpulent, and comes from the east, although they say they do not see the visitor, death, with the naked eye—they see him in their dreams.

Snakes are held in reverence by the Indians, and they rarely kill any, no matter how venomous. They light a pipe and smoke, and tell the snake to go in peace and not bite the Indians, as the Indians would not hurt him, but smoke the pipe of peace with him.

Wabasha, first chief of the Indians, was looked upon as a good man, and was chief of a large band until smallpox got amongst them and killed nearly one-half. Then the cholera wrought great destruction of life in the band, and remittent fever killed quite a number one year when we had a very dry summer, and the rivers, lakes and pools of water became very stagnant. Their remedy was to plunge into the water in the height of the fever, which either killed or cured very soon, for a good many recovered. I know that of those who plunged in the water some died. The band is now much reduced, and is about the smallest of all the bands of the Sioux. The Sioux are confederated because they can all speak one language, but each village lives and acts independent of any other party, and every man is his own master, and a king at home in his own lodge. He has no taxes to pay, no public buildings or highways to make, no schools to support, and nothing before him but the chase and the protection of his family from enemies. One would suppose them to be happy under such conditions, and no doubt they are at times, for they are greatly amused over the most trifling jokes, and go to great excess in sports. In like manner they are terribly depressed when anything of a serious nature happens to them, either in private or community affairs, and the greatest lamentation is made.

It would appear that the Indians do not retain great events in their memories for a great length of time, therefore they have no tradition of their origin, nor how they became possessed of this country, nor have they any knowledge of past

wars with other tribes. The oldest battle that they have any knowledge of took place when the Chippewas came down in force and attacked a camp of Sioux where the city of Prescott now stands. There were some fourteen or eighteen lodges of Sioux camped there, and there were about a thousand Chippewas. They attacked the Sioux in the night, and soon the men were nearly all killed. The women ran to their canoes, that were a few steps off, and pushed out into the stream, but in their fright forgot their paddles. At that point there is a large eddy, and the women in the canoes were carried round and round by the current. The Chippewas came to the beach and took hold of the canoes and pulled them ashore, and butchered the women and children at their leisure. A few men had fled up along the lake shore, and got into a little cove in the rocks. The Chippewas discovered them and attacked them, but here the Chippewas lost several of their men, for they could not get at the Sioux, only as they faced them right in front of the little cove, and the Sioux had the advantage of the shelter afforded by the rocks. When the Chippewas made an assault they would leave one or two of their number for one Sioux, but as they greatly outnumbered the Sioux they at length overcame them, and there was only one Sioux left. He made a dash for the water, and dived beneath the surface and stayed under as long as he could. At first the Chippewas did not see him, supposing he must have come to the shore, and they were engaged in taking care of the dead and wounded, but the second time he came to the surface of the water the Chippewas discovered him, and the Sioux saw the balls fly about his head like hail, but none touched him. He then took courage and dived again, and called upon the otter, and prayed to it as a god to give him power to dive and swim like an otter, that he might live to tell the tale of the fate of his comrades, as he was the only one left; and the prayer was heard, and he dived to the bottom of the lake, and found it very deep and cold. When he rose to the top of the water the Chippewas would fire their guns and the balls would make the water fly so as to dazzle his sight for some time, and he said that in eight times diving he got across the lake, but how he escaped is a wonder to relate. When he reached the opposite side of the lake, which is about one mile wide, he was so much exhausted that he could not get

out of the water, and lay for some time in the water with his head on a rock to rest a little time, after which he crawled out and sat upon a rock on the shore, and gave a whoop of joy at his marvelous escape. The Chippewas, when they saw what a wonderful feat he had performed, returned the compliment with another loud whoop. This battle took place about 150 years ago, and is the oldest that they have any tradition of. They speak of having occupied the country as far west as Leach lake, and of going to war over to Lake Superior, Green Bay, and even to St. Louis, and a little above the mouth of the Missouri is a place called "Portage de Sioux," where they used to take their canoes across by land from one river to another, but when or about what time they have no tradition.

The Catfish bar in Lake St. Croix furnishes another traditional story, but we have nothing that will give us any idea of the time when it occurred. A war party of Sioux went to war upon the St. Croix river, and were gone a long time, but had no success, and one of their number became sick when they reached the St. Croix on their return journey, and the others went on and left the sick man to perish, but there happened to be one of the party who was one of the sick man's comrades or companions. When he saw that the whole party were on their journey he said: "I am not going to leave my friend here to perish alone;" and he remained with the sick man while the rest of the party went on. Becoming almost starved, they found it necessary to get to the village where they could obtain provisions. The well man walked up and down the lake shore hoping to find a dead fish or to shoot a live one with an arrow. At last he came across a pike or pickerel, and killed it with his bow and arrow and roasted it, and asked his comrade to eat a piece of the fish, but the sick man refused, saying that when he joined the Big Medicine, that kind of fish was to be eaten upon no occasion whatever, for if he did eat anything that was forbidden by the Big Medicine, some great calamity would befall him. These marks, or reserves, or prohibitions, of eating certain parts or pieces of fowls or animals is a totum or mark of the order of that clan or family, and all Indians of that mark work together in all their jugglery and medicine operations, and I suppose an Indian would starve to death before he would break the rule or law. His comrade

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urged him to eat, but he would not. This made his friend feel very bad—to sit and see his friend starving to death. Finally the sick man said he would eat to ease the mind of his friend, and run the risk of what might be the result of breaking over their medicine rule, and asked his comrade if he could carry water all night in a litle dish that held only three or four spoonfuls. "Yes, I can do anything for you," his comrade said, and so the sick man took some of the fish and ate (this was in the evening), and after a short time began to get thirsty, and asked his comrade to bring water, so the young man took the little dish and brought some water, and in a little while he wanted more, and the young man went again, and the sick man kept asking for water, and his friend kept going with his little dish, and worked nearly all night in that way, but finally became exhausted and laid down and went to sleep. The sick man kept calling for water for some time, but no one came, and with much exertion he crawled down to the lake and commenced drinking, and after a while he found that he was turning into a fish, and the more he drank the faster he became a fish, and at last he became wholly a fish, and rolled into the lake. When the other Indian awoke he found that his comrade had become a large fish, and was lying across the lake on what is now called Catfish bar, and he felt very much grieved to think that his sick friend should become a fish because of his failure to watch him and carry water for him. He followed in the tracks of the war party, crying, and finally reached his village and told his comrade's wife what had happened, and she took a canoe and some friends and went to the place and found the great fish as stated, and they made great lamentation, and scattered red feathers upon the water, and prayed the gods of the water to let the big fish sink so that the canoes could pass; and so the big fish sank, but left a portion of the bar there. The bar extends almost across the lake yet, and this is all that was done in favor of the Indians, merely to let them have room enough to pass in the lake. This was all done for revenge upon the man for breaking the laws and rules of the Medicine party.

We can obtain nothing from the Indians concerning ancient history, and nothing reliable about the creation or the flood. The Indians are entirely ignorant, and all their ideas are of a

fanciful character. They believe in a great spirit of some kind, but have no idea of his power, nor his will and disposition toward the human race, and all their prayers, which are many, are made to the land, stone animals, and fowls of the air and water, and many creeping things; and like all native tribes each thinks itself wiser and better than the others, and in their great councils I have heard them acknowledge before a white and Indian assembly that they thought the whites excelled them in a few things, but the moment they assembled by themselves they would say the whites were the greatest fools they ever saw, and particularly when standing straight up in battle to be shot at.

PHILANDER PRESCOTT.

Minnehaha, Minnesota, Feb. 18, 1861.

Note.—Mr. Prescott was killed Aug. 18, 1862, in Sioux outbreak.

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